

Advantage

Age Scotland's magazine: winter 24, issue 67

age Scotland

It's Award season at Age Scotland

Celebrating our 2024 winners



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is back!

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Age Scotland is the Scottish charity for older people. Our magazine, Advantage, provides information, inspiration and ideas to empower Scotland's older people and their friends, families and carers.

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If you have news, events or issues that you would like Advantage to cover, please get in touch. We also welcome ideas on how we might improve the magazine. To stop receiving Advantage, please get in touch with us via the details below.

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Welcome to your winter edition of Advantage magazine!

I hope this issue of Advantage finds you with a hot drink, sheltered from the colder weather we've had recently.

With the nights drawing in, this time of year can traditionally be seen as a season for winding down – but that's certainly not the case for Age Scotland or our member groups, who are busy as ever with their work to support older people across the country.

In this edition, we're delighted to be spotlighting the worthy recipients and highly commended at this year's Age Scotland Awards (p8).

I'm sure the keen knitters and crocheters among you – or those looking to learn a new skill – will be excited to hear about the return of the popular Big Knit campaign (p4).

We've also got some useful tips to help you stay warm and well this winter. This includes information on being prepared for all weathers from the Met Office (p24), support available through the free Age Scotland Helpline (p26), and our stylish 2025 calendar (p31).

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and, as always, we welcome your feedback. Please get in touch if you'd like to see your campaign or project featured in a future edition; we're always looking to highlight the great work going on across Scotland by and for older people!



Katherine Crawford, Chief Executive

Katherine M. Crawford

Katherine Crawford,
Chief Executive

The Big Knit is back!

We are delighted to announce that our Big Knit campaign is back! We're inviting knitters across the country to get involved and knit little hats to adorn Innocent Smoothie bottles - every hat knitted helps raise vital funds for Age Scotland and our member groups.

You can knit or crochet hats while you coorie up at home over the winter, or come together over a knit and natter session. However you choose to get involved, you can be sure your creations will make a big difference to older people across Scotland.

Run in partnership with Age UK and Innocent Smoothies, Age Scotland receives a donation for every hat knitted. And if we reach our target of 60,000 hats, we could raise a whopping £18,000! This will contribute to running our services that support older people across Scotland. We also give a proportion of the money raised to our member groups who take part, to support their great work and thank them for their efforts.

Campaign dates

The campaign is running now, so you can get knitting and sending in your hats straight away. The campaign will run until June 2025.

All hats must be with us at the Age Scotland office by **Monday 16th June 2025**, but you are also welcome to send hats to us earlier and we'll get them boxed up and sent to the Innocent warehouse.

How to send your hats to us:

Please send hats to:
The Big Knit, Age Scotland
Causewayside House
160 Causewayside
Edinburgh EH9 1PR

• If you are in an Age Scotland member
• group, remember to include the name
• and address of your group so we can
• allocate the hats correctly. Thank you
• for your efforts!



Calling all knitters, crocheters and crafters – The Big Knit needs you

Patterns or questions:

For those more experienced knitters, feel free to make your own creations. We always love seeing the wonderful array of designs that our knitters create. If you are in need of some guidance or inspiration, sample knitting patterns and more information can be found at age.scot/bigknit.

Our fundraising team are also on hand to answer any questions and would love to hear your wonderful stories of knitting.

You can contact them by email at bigknit@agescotland.org.uk or by phone on **0333 323 2400**.

Thank you for taking part and happy knitting!

New storytelling resource available for dementia-friendly communities

About Dementia, Age Scotland’s forum for improving the lives of people living with dementia and unpaid carers, has released a brand-new Storytelling Resource.

Developed in collaboration with the Village Storytelling Centre, this innovative tool is designed to help people living with dementia share their experiences through the power of storytelling. It fosters meaningful discussions on a wide range of topics, providing an engaging and empowering way for participants to influence policy and express their views.

This storytelling resource has been carefully crafted to create a supportive environment for anyone living with dementia. The sessions are designed to encourage conversation without pressure, using fictional characters and scenarios that reflect real-life challenges faced by people with dementia. As participants offer advice and solutions to these characters, they can also explore their own experiences, building a sense of connection, purpose, and empowerment.

One session facilitator shared their thoughts, saying:

“It’s exciting because it’s not just for fun, although it is fun, it actually helps others. Many people felt like their opinions don’t matter, but this project shows that they do. Knowing that an organisation is listening makes the project feel alive.”



New resource will help people share experiences through the power of storytelling

The resource consists of six session themes, each focusing on important issues that matter to people living with dementia. These include policy, community, finance, hobbies, care, and human rights.

These themes have been specifically chosen to ensure participants can engage in discussions about the topics that directly affect their lives. Importantly, the resource is not limited to professional facilitators. It's accessible to anyone working with dementia-friendly communities, from support groups to care homes, providing a flexible and easy-to-use guide to stimulate thoughtful, meaningful conversations.

Whether you are experienced in working with people living with dementia or just beginning your journey, this resource is designed to help you create safe spaces where every voice is valued. The storytelling sessions are a wonderful way to help participants feel heard whilst having fun.

The Storytelling Resource is now available for download from our website. To get started, download the user guide and explore how this resource can transform conversations in your dementia-friendly community.

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Download the user guide then sign-up for the full resource by visiting:
age.scot/storytellingresource

Celebrating our Highly Commended groups and individuals

Age Scotland's mission is to inspire, involve, and empower older people in Scotland. The Age Scotland awards bring this mission to life by celebrating the work of our community groups, who make such a difference to the lives of older people locally and nationally.

We had 98 award nominations this year, testament to the incredible work taking place throughout Scotland every day. We want to say a personal thank you to all the community groups and volunteers who continue to dedicate their time to make Scotland a better place to grow older.

The selection process for our award winners is never an easy task, and our Highly Commended certificates are awarded to groups and individuals who go above and beyond to help older people in their communities, providing much needed support and friendship. Congratulations to all those receiving Highly Commended awards this year!

Shopmobility Renfrewshire - Supporting people with mobility disabilities to allow them to remain part of the community

Dundee Pensioners' Forum - Working to raise the profile of older people and ensuring their voices are heard

Nan McKay Community Hall - Maximising independence by bringing health & social care services to our older people

Walking Football Scotland - Maintaining, promoting and improving the physical, mental and social wellbeing benefits for older adults

Larkhall & District Volunteer Group - Providing services and activities to meet the needs of older people in the community



Jewish Care Scotland | Moniaive Evergreens

Moniaive Evergreens - Social club within a rural area providing opportunities for older people

Jewish Care Scotland - Connecting older people and promoting wellbeing

Dunoon Chest Heart & Stroke Club - Working to enhance the lives of older people and those with disabilities

Sporting Memories - Sports based reminiscence combined with inclusive physical activities

ACE IT Scotland, Moose in Hoose - Helping over 50's access the digital world, improving their wellbeing and keeping them connected

Elizabeth Ann Henderson - Organising various activities and fundraising for older people here and in Malawi

James Robertson - Founding member of Castle Douglas Men's Shed and volunteer with a range of local groups supporting older people

Laurene Cameron - Encouraging members of the Multiple Sclerosis Centre in Argyll to play shinty for the first time, many of whom are in their 80s

Audrey Whyte - Founder of Sounds Familiar, a Singing Group for people with Dementia and their Carers

South Asian support organisation awarded for Services to Older People

A health and welfare organisation offering a wide range of services to older South Asian and ethnic minority people in Edinburgh has won Age Scotland's Services to Older People award.

Networking Key Services (NKS) Limited provides everything from yoga classes and technology support, to benefits information and sessions on bereavement, domestic abuse and women's health issues.

Organisers say that NKS exists to empower older people in South Asian and ethnic minority communities in Edinburgh with information, knowledge and support.

Some of the groups within the organisation developed out of needs identified by the members. This includes the women only group, which allows women to speak freely about deeply personal issues which they would find difficult to discuss in the presence of men. One member said the help and support they get from other older women is 'amazing'.

The organisation also offers group outings twice a year, sessions on self-management of long-term health conditions, befriending services, financial advice, and they work with a cab service to pick up and drop off members.

There is a group for those living with dementia and their carers, which shares information, advice, and friendship. NKS is also raising awareness of autism, a condition that organisers say is relatively unknown among older people in South Asian communities.

One of the greatest benefits members talk about is how NKS makes them feel less alone and isolated. Getting together for a hot lunch as well as



Neena Agarwal and Neeru Bhatnagar of Networking Key Services receive their award

the sessions provided has brought older members of South Asian and ethnic minority communities closer. Even those who are housebound are able to take part in the many online events NKS offers.

One member said: “NKS is my lifeline. I wonder what I would do without their support. They are so helpful and respectful towards older people.”

Naina Minhas, director of NKS, said:

“We are delighted to have been honoured with the Age Scotland award for our dedicated services to South Asian older people. This award recognises the commitment and hard work we have put into supporting the wellbeing, dignity, and inclusion of older people from the South Asian communities. The recognition motivates us further to make a meaningful difference to the lives of older people.

“We would like to extend our deepest thanks to all of our staff, volunteers, and partners who have contributed to this achievement.”

Michael Gettins is an inspiration on Arran and beyond

The man who brought Pride celebrations to the island of Arran has been presented with Age Scotland's Inspiration Award.

Before Michael Gettins set about organising the first Pride event in 2023, there was no obvious LGBTQ+ hub or scene on the island. But this year's Pride drew more than 300 people along to take part and line the streets in support. As well as the parade, 27 local businesses participated in the Best Dressed Window competition, showing support for the LGBTQ+ community.

Ahead of the Pride events, Michael worked tirelessly to engage followers on social media through the Scottish and UK Pride network, encouraging them to recognise Arran as a warm and welcoming community. Young people on the island were ambassadors carrying flags and the parade was escorted by three e-bikes, highlighting the ambition to be greener, and mobility scooters were available for those with mobility issues, to allow more older people to take part.

Michael, a member of Age Scotland's LGBTQ+ Older People's Group, also sought to involve older people by attending local wellbeing cafes where he led workshops to 'celebrate and educate' on equality and inclusion, which he also runs in Arran High School.

As a busy tourist destination, and a popular spot for older people to move to in retirement, Michael recognised the need for community cohesion on Arran. He was keen to bring people together and alleviate the risk of isolation, mental ill health, addiction issues and suicide among LGBTQ+ communities.

Working together with a number of partner organisations, including local authorities, the health board, the Equality Network, Police Scotland, the



Michael Gettins receives his award, accompanied by Miss Sasha Blaze

Terence Higgins Trust and local businesses, Michael set about establishing Arran Pride for everyone.

Michael Gettins said: “I am still fairly baffled at why my name would be submitted, let alone be considered or worse still anything like receive an Inspiration Award is still a puzzle.

“In reality, I wake up each day wondering ‘who can I help today’ and have been blessed with many fantastic opportunities to bring my skills, experience, values and ambitions to some fruitful use!

“To be honest, I am incredibly humbled that people would think what I do is worthy of merit. I love working with people, I learn so much and thrive on making things a little better. I’ve always said, ‘I wish I could measure smiles’ and am delighted to say I have seen many and hope to see many more.”

Dedicated dementia activist wins Jess Barrow Award for Campaigning & Influencing

A retired radio journalist living with dementia who has campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness of the disease has won Age Scotland's Jess Barrow Award.

Willy Gilder, who lives in Edinburgh, works hard to overcome the stigma against people living with dementia and vigorously supports those facing the daily challenges associated with a dementia diagnosis.

Among his personal victories are having his driving licence reinstated following his diagnosis and becoming a member of the Scottish Government lived experience panel, which helped to develop the National Dementia Strategy for Scotland.

Willy was diagnosed shortly after moving to Scotland during Covid lockdown and had no-one to speak to. This period of isolation prompted him to share his experiences online and led to him founding STAND, a peer support group for people living with dementia in Fife.

Since his diagnosis, he has become a passionate advocate for those living with dementia. He has organised a webinar attended by more than 50 people to discuss how to overcome the stigma against people living with the illness. He has submitted his work to the Alzheimer Europe Conference in Switzerland where he was selected to give a presentation to delegates.

He continues to speak up for the lived experience of people diagnosed with dementia, epitomising what it means to live well with dementia and be a dementia activist. He is also a talented artist and active user of social media.



Willy Gilder and his son Freddy

Colleagues describe Willy as a ‘true inspiration and worthy recipient of this award’. Willy Gilder said:

“It’s very humbling to receive this award. Shortly after being diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, I was determined to get involved with trying to improve services for people with brain disease and to do whatever I could to fight the stigma that sadly still surrounds dementia.

“To my astonishment, this has taken me around the world, to conferences in Poland and Switzerland and on an extraordinary dementia friendly version of the Camino pilgrimage in Spain. I find myself in Zoom calls with all kinds of folk and sharing platforms with academics and clinicians. All the time, I’m trying to say the same thing: ‘nothing for us without us’.

“People living with the early stages of neurodegenerative brain disease have so much to offer. We have a lifetime’s experience in all kinds of fields. Scotland, I’m pleased to say, recognises this and is leading the world in involving people with ‘lived experience’. It’s nice to feel I play some part in that.”

Partnership working is key to success for Musical Memories

The Musical Memories Project in the Western Isles has won our Patrick Brooks Award for Partnership Working, for its success in bringing together a group of organisations to help older people in the community.

From its beginnings as a dementia café on the Isle of Harris, Musical Memories has evolved into a group for anyone with a long-term condition and their carers, as well as older people living alone.

It is a partnership made up of Western Isles Community Care Forum (WICCF), Alzheimer Scotland, the Leverburgh Care Home, the Harris House Care Home and the local community learning and development officer from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council).

Musical Memories is led by WICCF who notify individuals, carers and care homes of upcoming gatherings. Alzheimer Scotland also attend, sharing advice and information for carers and those living with dementia. The community and learning development officer also links into local schools, inviting children to come along to perform – and serve tea afterwards.

One of the pupil performers said: “It’s really nice to play for Musical Memories. The audience is so appreciative and it’s good fun. I was a bit nervous at first, but it has really boosted my confidence.”

Care home residents join the gatherings either online or face to face, helping them to feel part of the wider community. Some attend thanks to a new partner, Harris Community Wheels, which provides wheelchair accessible transport to allow those with mobility issues to come along.

One care home worker said: “When Musical Memories is on the screen the residents are far more alert. It really brightens their day. Those who have



Peggy Mackay (Western Isles Community Care Forum), Isabel Campbell (Leverburgh Care Home) and Ellie Donnelly (Alzheimer Scotland) accept their award

attended the community events really enjoy getting out and meeting other people.”

One regular member said: “It’s brought back to me songs I had heard before and forgotten. It’s good for your mental health.”

Peggy Mackay, co-ordinator of the Western Isles Community Care Forum, said: “Our Musical Memories group is delighted to have won the Patrick Brooks Award for Best Working Partnership. It’s a huge boost for a small rural project. The award is not just for the partners involved but for those who attend regularly and the performers. Without them, there would be no Musical Memories.

“That said, it’s great to receive recognition for the hard work that has gone into developing the group over the years, especially during lockdown when Musical Memories really did become a lifeline, reducing isolation for many older people in our community.”

Marjory D’Arcy is Age Scotland’s Volunteer of the Year

A woman from Aberdeen who has led an older people’s network for 15 years has been named as Age Scotland’s Volunteer of the Year.

Marjory D’Arcy, Chairwoman of the Grampian 50+ Network, has been described as an inspiration for the dedication, support and care she gives to older people across the north east of Scotland.

Grampian 50+ Network is made up of 42 walking groups with around 1,000 members across the region, through organised walks and social get-togethers.

One member of the network said: “The impact of Marjory’s work with older people has been enormous. Her efforts have markedly enhanced the wellbeing of hundreds of older people – many of whom could not otherwise have accessed such a range of opportunities through lack of transport or restricted income.”

Many older people who attend Network events speak about the importance of being in the fresh air, accessible exercise and making new social connections. Marjory’s work at the Network has helped people transition into retirement, adjust to bereavement, learn to live on their own or recover from physical or mental ill health.

Now that Marjory is standing down after 15 years at the Network, her colleagues are delighted to celebrate her enthusiasm, empathy, and commitment to improving the lives of older people in Grampian.

Marjory D’Arcy said: “I was very surprised and delighted to hear that I was to be awarded Volunteer of the Year award from Age Scotland in recognition of my 26 years of volunteering in total. The Network was



Marjory D'Arcy has been Chair of Grampian 50+ Network for 15 years

set up by me in 1998 to take forward work that had been previously supported by community education staff. I don't think it was part of my retirement plan to become so heavily involved but it has been a very worthwhile and enjoyable journey meeting lots of lovely, happy, healthy, active, and enthusiastic older people and having lots of laughs and fun.

“The organisation, a registered Scottish Charity, is I believe, unique in Scotland, with 40 Older People's Walking Groups from across Grampian. When we ask members about their groups, they not only highlight walks but other aspects of being in a group including the chatting, the sharing of ideas and interests, the company and fun. Many members live alone and being a member of a group helps with social isolation and loneliness.

“This award will mean a lot to the Network. Our strapline is ‘Promoting Health & Happiness in Later Life’ and that is what we try to do.”

Introducing our Member Group of the Year... Golden Friendships

A vibrant and inclusive club for older people in Clydebank has won Age Scotland's national Member Group of the Year award.

Golden Friendships is a popular group offering a weekly lunch club, activities, fun and friendship for almost 300 older people in the Clydebank community. At their busiest, the organisers and volunteers provided 700 older people with a Christmas lunch and festive gift last year, spread over four days to help the kitchen cope.

The group has recently added a Saturday afternoon event once a month alongside the regular Wednesday lunch club. The weekend gatherings feature lunch and entertainment.

Besides the fun and companionship, some more serious work goes on at the group. A couple of years ago the organisation worked to install accessible toilets with changing facilities in their venue. This was designed to ensure that anyone who had incontinence issues could quietly go off and change, then rejoin the group without feeling embarrassed or having to leave.

Members talk fondly of the cheerful staff and volunteers at Golden Friendships, describing it as 'one big family'.

Jim McLaren from Golden Friendships said: "We at Golden Friendships are absolutely thrilled about winning this award. In our efforts to tackle loneliness in our community, we reached out and got much needed funding from Age Scotland. The relationship that has grown from that, especially the face-to-face contact with Age Scotland's Community Development Officer, Ann, has made it a very enjoyable experience.



Jim, Agnes, Sharon and Karen from Golden Friendships receive their award

“We have been able to continue delivering meals to our pensioners which gets them out of their homes and into sociable company. Through these lunches, friendships have developed and our members are having a lot more regular contact with other members in the same position as themselves. This may be through phone calls, visiting each other’s home or meeting out at other social events.

“As a group it is fantastic to be recognised for all the hard work that our staff and volunteering teams put in daily to make our club welcoming and friendly for all who visit. Thank you from all at Golden Friendships.”



The Member Group of the Year Award was sponsored by Age Scotland partner, Sky Cares.

Wee Grants make a big difference across Scotland

It's always amazing to hear about the difference that Age Scotland member groups make to older people in their areas with even a small amount of funding. The Wee Grants, Big Difference programme saw 122 member groups make a positive impact with grants from £250 to £500. Here is a wee taste of the big impact they make.

Scalloway Youth & Community Centre, Shetland employed exercise tutors to run gentle exercises for older people during their weekly club sessions. The grant gave a boost to all those in attendance. Improving health & wellbeing and taking part as a group built on their friendships and confidence.

Ormlie Community Association, Thurso supported their 'silver activities'. One attendee described it as "a lovely group I look forward to each week, it's great catching up with friends over a cuppa and crafts."

Sounds Familiar provide regular musical sessions for people with dementia and their carers in Inverness. "My father who is 92 has vascular dementia and can understand very little and not express himself but his sessions with Sounds Familiar bring him to life. He is entranced by the music and sings along with such animation that I rarely see these days."

Fraserburgh & District Men's Shed bought cooking equipment and utensils to prepare and serve nutritious and warming food to members. They are also running 'Confidence To Cooking' sessions in conjunction with NHS Grampian, helping to address preparing easy to cook food that is nutritious and affordable.

Stirling4Community organised an outing for lunch club attendees. They went to the local theatre to see a production of the Wiz of Oz, an all singing, all dancing, 'banterlicious' family show with a first-class professional cast. It was 'a rare treat', "We all had a lovely afternoon of fun and laughter."



Sounds Familiar | Grants in action | Lanark Men's Shed

Active Seniors in Glasgow held two entertainment afternoons, where 70 members enjoyed karaoke, dancing and a 'high tea'. Feedback was so positive that there are hopes they can become a regular fixture!

The Bangla Centre used the funding to organise the 'Generation Face to Face' event, bringing older people to engage with the younger generation to mitigate loneliness. "I was so excited to share my childhood memory especially my favourite game called 'kabaddi' with the young pupils, and I was surprised how the young reacted to this."

Bute Advice Centre's grant towards transport allowed them to offer enhanced services to older people, delivering in-person outreach support around maximising incomes for older people. "I thought if I got my state pension then that was all I was entitled to, I was so pleased to find out about pension credit, this will make such a difference."

Forth Valley Men's Shed purchased T-shirts for members with the Shed logo and organised a celebration meal. "I've never wanted to go out since my wife died, however I thoroughly enjoyed the evening and even met some older friends I hadn't seen for years."

Lanark Men's Shed used the grant to pay towards Machinery Awareness Training for 16 members. Members benefited by having a greater health & safety knowledge of how to operate various woodworking machines.

G64 Community in East Dunbartonshire held Hallowe'en and Christmas parties which were enjoyed by 46 clients. 22 clients who were unable to attend these parties were given gifts at a later stage.

Getting ‘weather ready’ for winter with the Met Office

It’s that time of year again when we say goodbye to long summer days and prepare for the winter months ahead. The Met Office’s #WeatherReady campaign plays a key role in offering expert advice from trusted partner organisations to help you stay informed, safe, and ready for the challenges that the colder months can bring. Whether it’s snow, ice, or freezing temperatures, being prepared means you can stay safe and make the most of winter.

If last winter is anything to go by, there’s every reason to expect severe weather to affect us this season, with ten named storms occurring between September 2023 and January 2024. At this time of year in particular, it’s worth us being #WeatherReady, so that when disruptive weather happens, we know what we can do to avoid the worst impact.

The #WeatherReady campaign offers guidance on a range of themes including how to stay warm and look after your health and wellbeing. This may be as easy as wearing appropriate clothing – covering up with hats, scarfs and extra layers can make a big difference. Knowing how to respond to winter storms and icy conditions can also help take the worry out of winter, putting you in control.

Vulnerable people such as older individuals, those with underlying conditions or those who live alone, are particularly at risk during the winter. It is important to check on those who may struggle to keep themselves warm and safe during severe weather.



One of the easiest yet most effective steps you can take to be prepared is to simply check the weather forecast before heading out for the day. By taking a moment to review the forecast, you'll be better equipped to handle whatever the weather has in store, from a drop in temperature to difficult driving conditions.

Whether it's preparing for winter storms, managing health conditions, or simply staying warm, taking a proactive approach to winter safety benefits everyone. Checking in on those who need a little extra support can make this season much easier to navigate for all.

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A wide range of advice and articles can be found on the **Met Office website**, including top tips on health and wellbeing in collaboration with partners around the UK.

Food and fuel vouchers to support those in crisis this winter

Staying warm and eating well is central to older people's health and wellbeing but, with so many struggling to make ends meet, it's vital there is somewhere to turn to for support.

Through our partnership with SGN, Age Scotland's energy and food voucher initiative is aiming to offer support to older people in crisis this winter.

This scheme enables skilled advisers on Age Scotland's free national helpline to offer those in crisis a £30 credit towards fuel or food costs. Advisers will also provide energy and income maximisation advice to help older people use energy safely, affordably and efficiently, and will signpost to other sources of support.

We're incredibly grateful to SGN for their ongoing commitment to ensuring older people across Scotland are able to stay safe and warm at home. This support will make a positive difference to those who are reluctant or unable to heat their homes to a comfortable level for fear of running up unmanageable energy bills or falling into debt, or who are at risk of malnutrition due to skipping meals or eating less healthily.

Please note: the initiative is open to those aged 50 and over who are registered to a Scottish postal address and eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis through Age Scotland's **0800 12 44 222** helpline. A maximum of one fuel costs and/or food costs crisis voucher can be issued per eligible person during the initiative.



Our Winter Fuel Payment campaign

Since the shock announcement back in July that the Winter Fuel Payment was to be means tested, we have campaigned for the urgent reinstatement of this vital benefit.



We strongly oppose the decision to restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credit, because it means 89% of Scottish pensioners will go without this vital support to stay warm.

Age Scotland estimates 200,000 pensioners in Scotland living in fuel poverty or just above the poverty line will no longer receive this financial support over the winter months, while hundreds of thousands more on modest incomes will struggle with their energy bills even more than normal as a result.

Means-testing the Winter Fuel Payment, with no notice and no compensatory measures, is the wrong policy choice, and one that will potentially jeopardise the health as well as the finances of huge numbers of older people this winter.

We can't quite believe the UK Government has so doggedly pursued a policy which will make so many pensioners even poorer, and we are continuing to urge the Scottish Government to reinstate the devolved Pension Age Winter Heating Payment for all pensioners – the cost of which would amount to less than 5% of extra money earmarked for Scotland in the UK Government's Autumn Budget.

To support our ongoing campaign, please visit age.scot/SaveWFP.

Staying aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide



With carbon monoxide still causing illness and deaths in the UK each year, it is crucial to stay aware of how to keep yourself and loved ones safe from the highly poisonous gas.

Homes with a carbon fuelled appliance, such as a gas boiler or coal fire, should have a carbon monoxide detector. However, Age Scotland research has previously found that 1 in 10 over 50s who have an appliance such as a gas boiler do not have a working carbon monoxide alarm installed in their home.

We would strongly urge anyone who falls into this category to get an alarm if they do not already have one installed, as this is a simple but vital step to take to ensure you stay safe.

Those who already have one should test it regularly, ensure it is less than 10 years old, and remain aware of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

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To request a free carbon monoxide alarm or access further support and advice, please contact the free Age Scotland Helpline on **0800 12 44 222**.

It's also crucial to know the symptoms of CO poisoning; headaches, nausea, breathlessness, collapse, dizziness and loss of consciousness. If at any time you think there is CO in your home, go out to the fresh air and call the free 24-hour National Gas Emergency number immediately on **0800 111 999**.

Our Check In, Cash Out campaign helps you get all your entitlements

Check In, Cash Out was launched to help older people make sure they are claiming all the benefits to which they are entitled to – particularly during difficult times.



As we enter the coldest months of the year, it's important that every penny which could help older people keep their homes warm, prepare hot food and live comfortably, goes to the people who need it most.

Currently, hundreds of millions of pounds in vital financial support earmarked for older people in Scotland goes unclaimed. Our campaign aims to raise awareness and increase take-up of the social security available to help you live well.

For instance, only 12% of Scottish pensioners currently receive Pension Credit. It is heavily underclaimed and estimated that 75,000 pensioners in Scotland are entitled to it but are not yet in receipt.

Being in receipt of Pension Credit is also one of the key eligibility criteria for housing benefit, council tax reduction, a free TV licence, and continuing to receive the Winter Fuel Payment – worth up to £300 a year – so it's crucial to claim it if you are eligible.

Checking on your benefits entitlements with Age Scotland couldn't be easier. You can call our free Age Scotland Helpline on **0800 12 44 222** and ask for a benefits check, or you can use our online Benefits Calculator at **age.scot/benefitscalculator**.

Don't let money, which could make a real difference this winter, go to waste.



Join our volunteer reader panel

Would you like to help us by giving feedback on our information guides? Now you can, by joining our volunteer reader panel.

How does it work?

Once a month, we will email you one of Age Scotland's information guides to read. We will ask you to complete a quick and straightforward survey, to let us know how useful and clear the guide is.

You don't have to read all the guides you are sent or complete all surveys. You decide how often you want to participate. All feedback - good and bad - is gratefully received.

We will always reply to thank you for your help and update you on any changes that have been made to the guides because of the volunteer reader panel feedback.

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To join Age Scotland's volunteer reader panel, register your details at **age.scot/readers** and we will be in touch as soon as possible with information about the next steps.

If you would like more information about our panel, please email us: **publications@agescotland.org.uk** or call us on **0333 323 2400** and ask to speak to a member of our Information Team.

Looking ahead to 2025 with the Age Scotland calendar

Our ever-popular calendar is back! We know it's something many groups and individuals look forward to, so we're delighted to once again be offering our Age Scotland calendar free of charge to over 50s in Scotland.

Featuring beautiful illustrations of landmarks across Scotland, our calendar is a useful resource full of practical seasonal advice for making the most of later life all year round, including prompts on issues such as energy bills and benefit entitlements, as well as signposts to additional support and services available from Age Scotland and our valued partner organisations.

If you haven't already received a copy via one of our member groups, we'd invite any older person looking for an easy way to keep track and stay informed throughout 2025 to get in touch to request one.



Please visit age.scot/calendar2025 to order your free copy today via the quick online form. Calendars are also available through Age Scotland's free national Helpline on **0800 12 44 222**.

Please note, due to limited numbers, the Age Scotland 2025 calendars are only available to over 50s who have a Scottish postal address.

*Leave light,
not loneliness*

**No one should feel
alone in later life.**

A gift in your Will to Age Scotland will ensure that lonely and isolated older people in Scotland will have someone to talk to for friendship and reassurance in years to come.

**Leave light, not loneliness.
Leave a Legacy to Age Scotland.**

Find out more at
www.age.scot/legacy
0333 323 2400

 **age Scotland**

